

## EVIDENCE BASE H: VILLAGE SHOPS AND SERVICES

### EVIDENCE BASE H: VILLAGE SHOPS, SERVICES and the LOCAL CENTRE.

#### NPPF paragraph 70:

*To deliver the ..... services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should..... ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of the community.*

#### Core Strategy policy CS21:

*The..... council will resist the loss of small-scale shops including neighbourhood and village stores, eating and drinking establishments that support the needs of local communities, and support self containment. The Sites and Policies Development Plan Document will define exact boundaries to the retail centres...*

H.1. **Overview.** This section reviews the adequacy of local services to meet future demands. The key policy is the establishment of a 'Local Centre' (H.8).

H.2. **Shops, businesses and services in Backwell.** These include:

- a) Backwell Medical Centre;
- b) Backwell Dental Care;
- c) 24 shops and a Post Office;
- d) 3 public houses and a village club;
- e) 2 restaurants, two takeaways;
- f) Various businesses including 3 garages/car sales;
- g) Play-groups, Infant, Junior, Secondary Academy and private school.

H.3. **Backwell Medical Centre.** The Centre has confirmed that it has capacity to accommodate new patients. In the event of a significant increase in patient population the practice would request the Primary Care Trust to uplift the baseline funding, enabling the practice to appoint additional staff.

H.4. **Backwell Dental Care.** The practice has capacity for more patients and another surgery could be equipped if necessary. There is no NHS dentist in Backwell and patients need to travel to another village or Bristol to access NHS dentistry.

H.5. **Shops and businesses.** In recent years the number of village shops has declined. This is not only damaging to the local economy but can lead to social deprivation, particularly for older residents and those without transport. It can reduce the sense of community. By contrast premises selling food for eating in or taking-away, and hair styling/beauty treatments have increased.



**Shops at Dark Lane and the Cross Roads**

H.6. The Post Office is critical to the village particularly as the last remaining bank, HSBC, closed in autumn 2011. The Library also closed in 2010 (a mobile library service is now available on Monday afternoons at the Leisure Centre). There is no optician.

H.7. Backwell Parish Council's planning policy of 30 Sept. 2010 is:

**Planning proposals for additional retail outlets and businesses will be supported, provided the locations are suitable for the types of business and nearby parking is adequate or more is provided.**

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H.8. *BACKWELL FUTURE* replaces this policy with measures to safeguard the vitality and viability of local shops, businesses and services. *BACKWELL FUTURE* designates a 'Local Centre' [see following map], and specific policies will operate in this area.

**Planning policy: CENTRE 1.** The area shown in blue on the Backwell Local Centre map is designated the 'Local Centre'. [The map follows on a separate page.]

**Planning policy: CENTRE 2.** Development proposals for shops and businesses in the Local Centre will be supported provided that they are appropriate to the size and character of the village, support the creation of a safe, attractive and accessible shopping and business environment and improve the mix of uses in the Local Centre. An additional consideration will be whether nearby parking is adequate or more is provided. Appropriate proposals for mixed use, with apartments or flats, will be accepted where this is necessary to improve the viability of commercial premises.

**Planning policy: CENTRE 3.** Proposals resulting in the loss of shops or businesses in the Local Centre will need to demonstrate that:

- the vitality and viability of the Local Centre is not adversely affected; and
- adequate provision remains to meet local needs.

**Planning policy: CENTRE 4.** Proposals for retail and business use outside of the Local Centre will need to demonstrate that:

- the uses could not be located within or on the edge of the Local Centre; and
- they would have no adverse impact on the viability of the Local Centre.

H.9. Adequate customer parking is essential to the viability and sustainability of the Local Centre. **EVIDENCE BASE F** makes proposals for improving parking near village shops, and refers to NSC Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document.

**Planning policy: CENTRE 5.** Within the Local Centre proposals for redeveloping non-residential premises, or for changes of use of residential properties to retail or business uses, will be permitted provided that provision is made where practical (for example on land near the road frontage) for customer parking.

H.10. The improvement in walking and cycling infrastructure [EVIDENCE BASES D and Q refer] may also encourage increased patronage of local businesses.

H.11. **Schools.** Enquiries have been made to determine whether the village schools are able to accept additional pupils associated with new development. The Education Authority, North Somerset Council, advises (email 16/4/12): *'the Infant, Junior and Secondary school facilities serving Backwell will have sufficient capacity to address local needs without any changes to its current infrastructure.'*

H.12. Enquiries were also made directly with the local schools. The picture that emerged is:

- a) West Leigh Infants School. The annual intake is near to capacity. The school does not have capacity to take more pupils unless more teaching rooms, recreational areas and washroom facilities are provided (email 12/6/12).



**West Leigh Infant School**

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- b) Backwell Junior School. The annual intake is approximately 45 pupils in year 3 with spare capacity. By mid year 4 however classes are usually full. Any increase in capacity would require additional staff welfare facilities and further pupil recreational areas (email 12/6/12).



**Backwell Junior School**

- c) Backwell School. The School became an Academy in 2011. The intake is approximately 260 pupils per year; total 1,300 pupils. There is no capacity for additional pupils unless extra class rooms, subject area rooms, staff rooms, eating areas, shower facilities, washrooms etc. are provided. North Somerset advise *'As at September, 2011 approx 65% of pupils lived in the Backwell area which means that if local demand for secondary school did grow, there should be sufficient places at [the] school to accommodate local demand.'* There is a health and safety concern about minor traffic incidences near the school: approximately 2 to 3 pupils are hit by cars (usually wing mirrors) each year mainly in Station Road where the

pavements leading to the school are narrow [EVIDENCE BASE D refers].

- d) Fairfield School (private) has confirmed that it has capacity to accept a small number of additional pupils.

H.13. In November 2013 North Somerset Council announced planned extensions to West Leigh Infant School.

H.14. It is concluded that the capacity of schools is sufficient to accommodate additional pupils from the level of development proposed in *BACKWELL FUTURE*. Large scale development would appear to require additional buildings and other educational resources. The 'coaching-in' of pupils from other areas to Backwell schools may need to be adjusted so that pupil demand is within the school's capacity.



**Coaches in Station Road after leaving Backwell School**

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